

Apache County Trail Planning Meeting  
January 27, 2016  
Town of Eagar Town Hall

**Attendees:** Steve Rogers, Tami Ryall, Joe Sitarzewski, Mel Schweigert, Ron Shepherd, Jeremiah Loyd, Hazel Wolfe, Douglas Wolfe, Debra Seeley, Kevin Burk, Chris Chiesl, Delwin Wengert, Cate Bradley

**Agenda:**

- Introductions and Project Background
- Vision Statement Discussion
- Prioritize Goals for this Project
- Develop Talking Points
- Stakeholder Analysis Results
- Map Review and Discussion
- Field Trip
- Next Meeting Date and Agenda

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

For this third meeting, there were many returning to continue involvement in this trail planning process. There were a few new participants and for their benefit, refresher background information was offered. This is a collaborative process began as an exploration of a County regional trail concept that would connect the communities of Eagar, Springerville and St. Johns and parts of the County – possibly also connecting the north boundary of the Apache Sitgreaves NF and the southern boundary of Petrified Forest NP. The project has since shifted focus to explore a regional OHV trail, whose alignment is to be determined.

The Town of Eagar applied for assistance from the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program. The RTCA staff role is to facilitate the meetings and help the County and three communities focus on their common vision, goals and the proposed trail corridor.

To assure that each jurisdiction is consistently represented in this process, it was agreed that this process/project will be presented to the Mayors and Councils of the three communities and the County Supervisors with a request for an appointed representative from each to attend and participate in the planning meetings. It was agreed that would be done by the next meeting at the end of February. All meeting will remain open to the public.

The point of this collaborative process is to attain a balance in the benefits to all communities from the economic development that could be sparked by a County regional trail. When asked to explain the origin of this effort, Delwin Wengert described the Paiute Trail in south central Utah as an example of a 900 mile OHV trail that connects many communities and offers a multiple day excursion/vacation opportunity.

VISION STATEMENT DRAFTING

At the December meeting, the group brainstormed ideas for a project Vision statement which was sent out for participants to review and edit. Ron reviewed the draft statements using a language/education level rating system and shared that both draft versions were much too complex with language that is not easily understandable. Cate commented that those drafts may reflect a need to better focus on the purpose of the trail and the benefits to the host communities. There is still work to be done on this task.

PRIORITIZE GOALS FOR THIS PROJECT

Following are the comment/concepts/values expressed related to the goals for this project:

- Trail should be multiple use (both motorized and non-motorized)
- The trail should connect communities as an economic driver for tourism

- Promotion of the trail should feature unique sites and destinations in this area to increase tourism interest in this part of Apache County
- Determine where and how to cross the Little Colorado River
- This project will be supported by all three communities and the County through a committee comprised of appointed representatives from each jurisdiction, as well as interested and key stakeholders
- Connections to the trail should be created within each community to reduce the need to trailer an OHV to get on to it
- Events, such as the existing Jamboree, in each community and the region should be created to feature/take advantage of/promote the trail

### MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

Doug said the AZ Geological Survey may have data to add to this mapping effort.

The Show Low Chamber of Commerce and the TRACKS organization of the Arizona White Mountain Trails System are interested in this project for the whole region in this portion of Apache County/White Mountains. It may be beneficial to reach out to Greer, as well. This may be a good opportunity to partner with the White Mountain Foundation who are working to improve fishing and conservation issues at Becker and Crescent Lakes. There may also be an opportunity to address bank restoration at areas along the Little Colorado River. This trail will be built with grants and needs to be planned so it can be implemented with very limited funds. That may require a trails organization to be formed to oversee implementation and maintenance for the trail. The process will require working with AZ State Land Department related to trail easements, costs, etc.

### DEVELOP TALKING POINTS

This topic was not addressed until there is more information about the trail alignment possibilities.

### STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

This topic was not discussed because the mapping discussion took the main focus.

### MAP REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

At the December meeting, Steve provided maps of the 3-community/county area. Those maps were used to discuss possible trail alignment(s). Doug says there are very interesting geologic/archaeological sites to the east of Eagar and Springerville in the Coyote Hills area. There was discussion about possibly using the Kinder-Morgan pipeline R-O-W as a major segment of the proposed trail. There are some other ranch roads that could be considered as possible segments to create a trail. Mel has done some mapping of the area and will provide that data to Steve for the purpose of map making for discussion at the next meeting.

### FIELD TRIP

The field trip that was scheduled for after the meeting was postponed until after the February meeting.

### NEXT MEETING

Next meeting Wednesday February 24, 2016 at Eagar Town Hall from 9 a.m. to Noon with field trip to follow meeting.

### NEXT AGENDA

Updates:

- Presentations to elected officials/appointed representatives
- RTP grant application draft
- TRACKS meeting results
- Stakeholder Analysis results
- Mapping layers

Field trip